



San Diego City Attorney **MICHAEL J. AGUIRRE**

NEWS RELEASE

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IN RESPONSE TO CITIZEN CONCERNS, CITY ATTORNEY POSTS PUBLIC RECORDS RECEIVED FROM KPBS REGARDING PROGRAMMING AND FUNDING

San Diego, CA— San Diego State University's KPBS operates as a public broadcasting station for the community and, as a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) member station, must adhere to PBS's Editorial Standards and Policies. It has the responsibility to maintain this public trust of the airwaves by producing diverse public affairs programming that "reflects the pluralism of our society," and is "not dominated by any single point of view," while shielding the programming process from "political pressure or improper influence from funders or other sources."

With these principles in mind, City Attorney Michael Aguirre made a public records request under the California Public Records Act on behalf of a constituent for information from KPBS in connection to its cancellation of the station's only daily public affairs show, "Full Focus," and public dollars that support certain programming. KPBS has begun to respond to the request and documents will be available to concerned citizens who want to view them on the City Attorney's web site.

"Full Focus" was KPBS' only regular television outlet that featured diverse members from the community who spoke on a wide range of news and public affairs issues. In doing so, it was fulfilling its obligation to provide the public with information to make informed judgments on local and national issues.

The request also sought information related to "Editors Roundtable," a weekly program that was not cancelled and which features three news editors from media outlets who offer their personal viewpoints on the issues. There is also a business transaction between KPBS and Cable Channel 4, which broadcasts the television edition of the program.

"Since the public records request was made public by KPBS, I've received more citizen concerns questioning whether KPBS is fulfilling its responsibility as a public broadcasting station for the people," said City Attorney Aguirre. "In addition, the Editors Roundtable's regular opinion-maker is the Union-Tribune's Editorial Director, and people have expressed concern that the newspaper already enjoys a virtual monopoly on editorial content disseminated to the citizens of San Diego."

(MORE)

KPBS is a licensee of the Federal Communications Commission and is affiliated with the PBS system and must operate under the (PBS) Editorial Standards and Policies: "Each local station is "ultimately responsible for assuring an appropriate balance of subjects and viewpoints across its broadcast schedule..."

Unlike commercial television stations, PBS stations have a higher mandate to assure that its overall programming contains a "broad range of opinions and viewpoints, including those from outside society's existing consensus..." The policy also states that, "The surest road to intellectual stagnation and social isolation is to stifle the expression of uncommon ideas; today's dissent may be tomorrow's orthodoxy."

KPBS receives federal funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which was created by the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. CPB distributes federal monies to individual public television and radio broadcasting stations such as KPBS. CPB's role is also to facilitate the "full development of public telecommunications in which programs of high quality, diversity, creativity, excellence, and innovation, which are obtained from diverse sources, will be made available to public telecommunications entities, with strict adherence to objectivity and balance in all programs or series of programs of a controversial nature."

Public record documents obtained from KPBS can be viewed by visiting www.sandiegocityattorney.org, click "Significant Reports and Legal Documents."

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